

# United States Senate Inquiry

## Day 13

### Testimony of Daniel Buckley

Source : <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/USInq/AmInq01Indxa.php>

*(Testimony taken separately before Senator William Alden Smith, chairman of the subcommittee.)*

*(The witness was sworn by Senator Smith.)*

Senator SMITH.

Mr. Buckley, where do you live?

Mr. BUCKLEY.

855 Trent Avenue, Bronx.

Senator SMITH.

How old are you?

Mr. BUCKLEY.

Twenty-one years old.

Senator SMITH.

Where did you get aboard the [\*Titanic\*](#)?

Mr. BUCKLEY.

At Queenstown.

Senator SMITH.

Had you been living in Ireland?

Mr. BUCKLEY.

Yes; I lived in King Williamstown, Town Court.

Senator SMITH.

How did you happen to come over to America?

Mr. BUCKLEY.

I wanted to come over here to make some money. I came in the *Titanic* because she was a new steamer. This night of the wreck I was sleeping in my room on the *Titanic*, in the steerage. There were three other boys from the same place sleeping in the same room with me.

I heard some terrible noise and I jumped out on the floor, and the first thing I knew my feet were getting wet; the water was just coming in slightly. I told the other fellows to get up, that there was something wrong and, that the water was coming in. They only laughed at me. One of them says: "Get back into bed. You are not in Ireland now."

I got on my clothes as quick as I could, and the three other fellows got out. The room was very small, so I got out, to give them room to dress themselves.

Two sailors came along, and they were shouting: "All up on deck! unless you want to get drowned."

When I heard this, I went for the deck as quick as I could. When I got up on the deck I saw everyone having those lifebelts on only myself; so I got sorry, and said I would go back again where I was sleeping and get one of those life preservers; because there was one there for each person.

I went back again, and just as I was going down the last flight of stairs the water was up four steps, and dashing up. I did not go back into the room, because I could not. When I went back toward the room the water was coming up three steps up the stairs, or four steps; so I did not go any farther. I got back on the deck again, and just as I got back there, I was looking around to see if I could get any of those lifebelts, and I met a first class passenger, and he had two. He gave me one, and fixed it on me.

Then the lifeboats were preparing. There were five lifeboats sent out. I was in the sixth. I was holding the ropes all the time, helping to let down the five lifeboats that went down first, as well as I could.

When the sixth lifeboat was prepared, there was a big crowd of men standing on the deck. And they all jumped in. So I said I would take my chance with them.

- 24 Senator SMITH.  
Who were they?
- 25 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Passengers and sailors and firemen mixed. There were no ladies there at the same time.
- 26 When they jumped, I said I would go too. I went into the boat. Then two officers came along and said all of the men could come out. And they brought a lot of steerage passengers with them; and they were mixed, every way, ladies and gentlemen. And they said all the men could get out and let the ladies in. But six men were left in the boat. I think they were firemen and sailors.
- 27 I was crying. There was a woman in the boat, and she had thrown her shawl over me, and she told me to stay in there. I believe she was [Mrs. Astor](#). Then they did not see me, and the boat was lowered down into the water, and we rowed away out from the steamer. [Buckley was in boat 13 while Mrs. Astor was in boat 4.]
- 28 The men that were in the boat at first fought, and would not get out, but the officers drew their revolvers, and fired shots over our heads, and then the men got out. When the boat was ready, we were lowered down into the water and rowed away out from the steamer. We were only about 15 minutes out when she sank.
- 29 Senator SMITH.  
What else happened?
- 30 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
One of the firemen that was working on the *Titanic* told me, when I got on board the [Carpathia](#) and he was speaking to me, that he did not think it was any iceberg; that it was only that they wanted to make a record, and they ran too much steam and the boilers bursted. That is what he said.
- 31 We sighted the lights of the big steamer, the *Carpathia*. All the women got into a terrible commotion and jumped around. They were hallooing and the sailors were trying to keep them sitting down, and they would not do it. They were standing up all the time.
- 32 When we got into the *Carpathia* we were treated very good. We got all kinds of refreshments.
- 33 Senator SMITH.  
Did you feel a shock from the collision when the ship struck?
- 34 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; I did.
- 35 Senator SMITH.  
And did that wake you up?
- 36 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
It did. I did not feel any shock in the steamer; only just heard a noise. I heard a kind of a grating noise.
- 37 Senator SMITH.  
Did you get right out of bed?
- 38 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; I did.
- 39 Senator SMITH.  
When you got out, you got into the water? There was water in your compartment in the steerage?
- 40 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; water was there slightly. There was not very much.
- 41 Senator SMITH.  
How much?
- 42 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
The floor was only just getting wet. It was only coming in under the door very slightly.
- 43 Senator SMITH.  
You had two or three boys with you?
- 44 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; three boys that came from the same place in Ireland.
- 45 Senator SMITH.

What became of those other three boys?

46 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
I can not say. I did not see them any more after leaving the room where I parted from them.

47 Senator SMITH.  
They were lost?

48 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; they were lost.

49 Senator SMITH.  
Was there any effort made on the part of the officers or crew to hold the steerage passengers in the steerage?

50 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
I do not think so.

51 Senator SMITH.  
Were you permitted to go on up to the top deck without any interference?

52 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes, sir. They tried to keep us down at first on our steerage deck. They did not want us to go up to the first class place at all.

53 Senator SMITH.  
Who tried to do that?

54 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
I can not say who they were. I think they were sailors.

55 Senator SMITH.  
What happened then? Did the steerage passengers try to get out?

56 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; they did. There was one steerage passenger there, and he was getting up the steps, and just as he was going in a little gate a fellow came along and chucked him down; threw him down into the steerage place. This fellow got excited, and he ran after him, and he could not find him. He got up over the little gate. He did not find him.

57 Senator SMITH.  
What gate do you mean?

58 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
A little gate just at the top of the stairs going up into the first class deck.

59 Senator SMITH.  
There was a gate between the steerage and the first class deck?

60 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes. The first class deck was higher up than the steerage deck, and there were some steps leading up to it; 9 or 10 steps, and a gate just at the top of the steps.

61 Senator SMITH.  
Was the gate locked?

62 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
It was not locked at the time we made the attempt to get up there, but the sailor, or whoever he was, locked it. So that this fellow that went up after him broke the lock on it, and he went after the fellow that threw him down. He said if he could get hold of him he would throw him into the ocean.

63 Senator SMITH.  
Did these passengers in the steerage have any opportunity at all of getting out?

64 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; they had.

65 Senator SMITH.  
What opportunity did they have?

66 Mr. BUCKLEY.

I think they had as much chance as the first and second class passengers.

67 Senator SMITH.  
After this gate was broken?

68 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; because they were all mixed. All the steerage passengers went up on the first class deck at this time, when the gate was broken. They all got up there. They could not keep them down.

69 Senator SMITH.  
How much water was there in the steerage when you got out of the steerage?

70 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
There was only just a little bit. Just like you would throw a bucket of water on the floor; just very little, like that.

71 Senator SMITH.  
But it was coming in, was it?

72 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; it was only just commencing to come in. When I went down the second time, to get one of the life preservers, there was a terrible lot of water there, in a very short time.

73 Senator SMITH.  
How much?

74 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
It was just about three steps up the stairs, on the last flight of stairs that I got down.

75 Senator SMITH.  
Did you find any people down in the steerage when you went back the second time?

76 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
There were a number, but I can not say how many. All the boys and girls were coming up against me. They were all going for the deck.

77 Senator SMITH.  
Were they excited?

78 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; they were. The girls were very excited, and they were crying; and all the boys were trying to console them and saying that it was nothing serious.

79 Senator SMITH.  
Were you crying at the time?

80 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Not at this time. There was a girl from my place, and just when she got down into the [lifeboat](#) she thought that the boat was sinking into the water. Her name was [Bridget Bradley](#). She climbed one of the ropes as far as she could and tried to get back into the *Titanic* again, as she thought she would be safer in it than in the lifeboat. She was just getting up when one of the sailors went out to her and pulled her down again.

81 Senator SMITH.  
How many people were there in the steerage when you got out of bed?

82 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
I can not say.

83 Senator SMITH.  
Could you see many people around?

84 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes, sir; there was a great crowd of people. They were all terribly excited. They were all going for the decks as quick as they could. The people had no difficulty in stepping into the lifeboat. It was close to the ship.

85 Senator SMITH.  
I want to ask you whether, from what you saw that night, you feel that the steerage passengers had an equal opportunity with other passengers and the crew in getting into the lifeboats?

86 Mr. BUCKLEY.

Yes; I think they had as good a chance as the first and second class passengers.

87 Senator SMITH.  
You think they did have?

88 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes. But at the start they tried to keep them down on their own deck.

89 Senator SMITH.  
But they broke down this gate to which you have referred?

90 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes, sir.

91 Senator SMITH.  
And then they went on up as others did, mingling all together?

92 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; they were all mixed up together.

93 Senator SMITH.  
Have you told all you know, of your own knowledge, about that?

94 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes.

95 Senator SMITH.  
Were you where you could see the ship when she went down?

96 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Yes; I saw the lights just going out as she went down. It made a terrible noise, like thunder.

97 Senator SMITH.  
I wish you would tell the committee in what part of the ship this steerage was located.

98 Mr. BUCKLEY.  
Down, I think, in the lower part of the steamer, in the after part of the ship; at the back.

99 Senator SMITH.  
That is all. Thank you.

100 (Witness Excused.)